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ABSTRACT

The Eastern Oklahoma Development District (EODD) is a multifaceted planning organization, broadly concerned with the overall welfare of the residents in seven Oklahoma counties. One of its goals is to assure adequate library services to all persons desiring to use them. To assure these services, a plan was initiated to coordinate the library planning of the state, the Department of Libraries and the district library with the social services planning of EODD. Functional activities were initially categorized as preliminary studies, reviews, and analyses to determine (1) which library planning efforts were relevant to those of EODD in providing for a range of social services; (2) the data needs and deficiencies of the district library with the object of sharing common socioeconomic data useful in planning; and (3) economical and effective ways in which EODD can assist the district library in extending services to unserved areas. The initial working period showed that cooperation was successful. Further coordination was strongly recommended, especially with regard to disadvantaged groups, elderly, youth, and poor. (Author/SL)

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EASTERN OKLAHOMA DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

INITIAL

LIBRARY PLAN

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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BACKGROUND

As early as August 1974, it became known to the non-metropolitan substate planning districts throughout the state that one time grants not to exceed $2,000 would be available from the Oklahoma Department of Libraries. After considerable solicitation from interested substate planning staff, an application procedure was finally established 5 months later and the districts were invited to submit proposals, which--if they were judged feasible and likely to be productive--would be funded in February, with the work to be accomplished soon thereafter and a report, or plan document, to be submitted at the end of the study period.

This document is the culmination of this process and represents the first effort of EODD to work in concert with the State Department of Libraries and the Eastern Oklahoma District Library to develop an initial plan that will address the needs of the people of Eastern Oklahoma. It is felt by the staff of EODD that this effort has led to a worthwhile achievement; that the planning process has succeeded; and that a working relation is possible in the future to implement specific recommendations of this Plan.

PLAN PURPOSES

The purpose, as stated in the original proposal, is to develop a plan that will lead to the coordination of planning for library services with social services planning of the substate planning district, EODD.

The Eastern Oklahoma Development District, as a multifaceted planning organization, is broadly concerned with the overall welfare of its residents--all the people in the 7 counties of Adair, Cherokee, McIntosh, Muskogee, Okmulgee, Sequoyah and Wagoner--and is directly responsible to its member entities, including the counties, cities and towns, conservation districts, and recognized special interests groups. Funded in large part by planning grants from several agencies, such as HUD, EDA, HEW and LEAA, the District through its comprehensive planning process is charged with the responsibility of adequately planning for the economical and effective use of the resources--natural and manmade--of the District.

Social Services Planning Through the District

As well as the "physical" plans for the region (land use, housing, water and sewer, etc.), social services are planned for, as funds and manpower become available.

As early as 1973, in its Goals Determination Process, the District incorporated goals and objectives, with consistent policies, for social services in the area. One goal was to assure adequate library services to all persons who desire to use them. How exactly the District might "assure" these services is the justification and rationale for this plan document and the work that preceded it.

Coordination Efforts

The District has no legal authority to implement its plans; rather it must by design work through its members--local elected officials--who use its services. Thus to assure adequate levels of library services to users, the District principally acts in a coordination capacity, to bring together agencies and organizations offering services to those communities and counties desiring the

services. A major effort in this plan period was to coordinate efforts among the state, the Department of Libraries, the District Library, headquartered in Muskogee City, and the various users, communities and counties in EODD.

FUNCTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Functional activities were initially categorized as preliminary studies, reviews and analyses to determine: A) Library planning efforts relevant to those of EODD in providing for a range of social services; B) Data needs and deficiencies of the District Library with the object of sharing common socio-economic data useful in planning; and C) Economical and effective ways in which EODD can assist the District Library in extending services to unserved areas.

Findings of these activities are briefly narrated here:

A. Planning Efforts

The District and State Library Systems have active and effective planning programs that do not duplicate other existing programs. EODD planning efforts are capable of being coordinated with those of the Library Systems on a project by project basis. And it is here that the substate planning districts might be of greatest benefit to the Library Systems.

EODD social planning efforts now focus largely on juvenile delinquency prevention and elderly assistance--meals, rides, etc. Specific projects in these areas could be supported by library resources. The individual program directors (the Law Enforcement Planner and the Aging Planner) could work with the District Library Staff and Board to insure timely coordination of effort.

Much more work needs to be done with the "disadvantaged", among whom would be non-English speaking persons (largely Indians and Mexicans), and the handicapped--especially those unable to travel to public facilities. As specific work activities in FY 1975, EODD--through the HUD 701 Planning Program--will assess housing conditions throughout the District; and through an Aging grant will survey the elderly. Here, through a simple process of adding a few relevant questions, specific data could be gathered about the reading habits and needs of people throughout the District.

B. Data Collection Needs

Basic data needs of the District Library are for specific non census type information on a local basis, such as for example the number of Indian children in a county who may require books in Indian languages. This type of information is costly to obtain and constantly in need of updating, but it is invaluable to any overall planning effort. EODD similarly requires valid, local data; so it is proposed that an open exchange of information exist between the substate and the District Library.

C. Extending Services

Of the 7 EODD counties, 2--Wagoner and Okmulgee--are not members of the Eastern Oklahoma District Library. The EODD staff in cooperation with District Library staff invited both counties--by means of interested citizens and groups--to discuss joining. EODD staff acted here as a mediator, which was perhaps not the most effective use of resources. In both Okmulgee and Wagoner, general sentiment was to delay investigation of the multi-county library approach until later--August or September. Although major staff time and effort went into this activity, the result was, in retrospect, negligible, since neither county is in any better position to consider the District concept.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND FINDINGS

Thus from the brief working period, these recommendations seem appropriate.

1. Coordination and cooperation between the District and State Library Systems and EODD are desirable. Very close liaison should be reserved for individual projects where the direct capabilities and expertise of EODD would be meaningful. Specific programs would include provision of services to the elderly and to juveniles (law enforcement related).

2. Local assistance planning produces largely community development plans for towns and cities in EODD. All future planning efforts here will address more fully the library system by soliciting input from the District and/or State Library Department.

3. Specific data needs of the District Library can be requested from EODD, which may in turn program them into existing functional activities or propose special programs to achieve the information if funding is available. Cost sharing here is another possibility.

4. Use of EODD staff to assist directly in an informational program to extend library services to unserved areas is feasible, but questionable in terms of expense and expertise. A better approach would be to invite District or state library personnel to address the various county-civic organizations linked to EODD, such as the County Development Councils or the City Councils. EODD does not have the resources or expertise currently to conduct a full scale informational program regarding multi-county library facilities.

5. EODD should not be expected to do direct library services planning, since such is not a legitimate responsibility of the substate planning organization.

FUTURE COORDINATION

Since the initial plan is a preliminary attempt to assess the possibility of cooperation, the results have been successful. Future coordination is strongly recommended, especially to consider ways to serve disadvantaged groups, elderly, youth and poor.

Special projects could be coordinated. These include: Bi-centennial Programs, oral history collection, Indian history libraries, Black history collections and the like.

Further EODD staff can be used effectively to acquaint cities and counties with the financial costs, etc. of library services and can assist communities to obtain suitable state/federal funds for buildings.

It is finally prposed that if future funds become available to the substates, that EODD prepare a specific proposal to plan for one or more of these activities or others that become important in the overall program of the District.